

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/867,333

Examiner

Scott L. Jarrett

Applicant(s)

ROBSON ET AL.

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 5/22/2007.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-9,11-13,15-17,19-32,34,35,37-45,47-49,51-53,55-63,65-67 and 69-71.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☒ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date 5/18/2007
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material

5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____.
7. ☐ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____.

Beth Van Doren
Beth Van Doren
AU 3623
Primary Examiner

ALLOWANCE

1. The following is an Allowance in response to the Amendment submitted on May 22, 2007. Applicant's amendment amended 1-9, 11-13, 15-17, 19-32, 34-35, 37-45, 47-49, 51-53, 55-63, 65-67 and 69-71 claims and canceled claims 10, 14, 18, 33, 36, 46, 50, 54, 64, 68 and 72-76. Currently claims 1-9, 11-13, 15-17, 19-32, 34-35, 37-45, 47-49, 51-53, 55-63, 65-67 and 69-71 are pending and are allowed.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance.

The present invention is directed to a project management system and method for managing the dependency relationships between a plurality of hierarchically organized interdependent tasks and each of an issue, change request and change order that are integrated into the project task hierarchy via the dependency relationship and have an associated document which includes the proposed or authorized steps to resolve the issue; wherein the issue defines an identified problem associated with one of the project tasks whose resolution is necessary for the task to be completed, the change request identifies the step(s) to be taken, pending authorization, to resolve the issue and the change order identifies the authorized steps taken to resolve the issue.

The closest prior art Continuus Software's Continuus Change Managment Suite, Hurd U.S. Patent No. 6,222,535 and Primavera's Project Planner fail to teach or

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suggest either singularly or in combination a project management system and method comprising the definition and storage, in a database, an issue, change request and change order; defining a first relationship for each of the plurality of project tasks, requiring the definition and storage, in a database, of at least one second dependency relationship between the issue, change request and change order such that the issue, change request and change are integrated into the project task hierarchy without changing the first and second dependencies (Remarks: Paragraph 1, Page 22; Paragraph 1, Page 23), associating a document with the issue, change request and change order wherein the document includes the proposed or authorized steps to resolve the issue and providing a graphical representation of the task, issue, change request and change order hierarchy indicating the first and second dependency relationships as recited in independent Claims 1, 37 and 55.

The closest prior art Continuus Software's Continuus Change Managment Suite, Hurd U.S. Patent No. 6,222,535 and Primavera's Project Planner fail to teach or suggest either singularly or in combination a project management system and method comprising the definition and storage, in a database, an issue, change request and change order; defining a first relationship for each of the plurality of project tasks, requiring the definition and storage, in a database, of at least one second dependency relationship between the issue, change request and change order such that the issue, change request and change are integrated into the project task hierarchy without changing the first and second dependencies, and associating a document with the

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issue, change request and change order wherein the document includes the proposed or authorized steps to resolve the issue as recited in independent Claims 1, 19, 37 and 55.

Continuus teaches a system and method for project change management comprising identifying, defining and tracking change orders/requests which identify issues to be resolved (Paragraph 1, Page 76), the steps to be taken to resolve the issue (Paragraph 4, Page 32; Paragraphs 2-3, Page 44; Paragraphs 5-7, Page 68; Last Paragraph, Page 77), wherein the tasks are integrated (mapped and synchronized) into the project's work breakdown structure and schedule (Paragraphs 4-5, Page 19; Bullet 4, Page 20; Paragraph 4, Page 32), reviewing and approving and/or rejecting the resolved change requests/orders (Bullets 1-2, Page 32; Paragraph 1, Page 32; Last Paragraph, Page 55; Figure 10) and storing the change requests/orders, the identified steps to be taken to resolve the issue identified in the change requests/orders and a plurality of other related project/change information in several repositories and/or databases (Bullet 5, Page 20; Task Folder, Last Paragraph, Page 59; Paragraphs 5-7, Page 68; Paragraph 2, Page 80).

Continuus further teaches that the project and change management system and method includes a plurality of interdependent tasks, including at least project tasks and change request tasks (Continuus tasks), wherein the relationships/interdependencies between these tasks, change orders and project artifacts (code, documents, etc.) are tracked (Paragraph 5, Page 59; Paragraphs 3-5, Page 59).

Continuus teaches organization the plurality of project and change request (issue, change order, resolution steps/Continuus tasks, etc.) into at least two hierarchies including project task hierarchies (work breakdown structure, Microsoft Project plan; Pages 19-20) and data/file repositories (folders, directory trees; Pages 59-60) wherein the tasks integration (insertion, addition) into the hierarchies does not effect interdependencies between elements already in and/or integrated into the hierarchies.

Specifically Continuus teaches decomposing change requests/orders into a series of steps/tasks required to resolve the issue identified in the change order/request wherein those tasks are integrated into and synchronized with existing hierarchies including the project's hierarchical project plan(s) wherein the interdependencies (links, associations, traceability) between the change request tasks and the project tasks are maintained (remain unchanged) thereby enabling users to manage both the change request/order tasks (resolution steps) and the ongoing project tasks simultaneously (Page 19; Bullets 1-5, Page 20; Paragraph 4, Page 32; Paragraph; Paragraph 7, Page 59) as well as enabling users to trace the resolution of issues from the change request to the resolution tasks/steps to the actually project artifacts impacted by the changes (Paragraphs 5-7, Page 68) wherein such management and traceability would be impossible if the interdependencies where not maintained.

Continuus does not expressly teach defining and storing an issue, change request and change order wherein the issue defines an identified problem associated with one of the project tasks whose resolution is necessary for the task to be completed,

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the change request identifies the step(s) to be taken, pending authorization, to resolve the issue and the change order identifies the authorized steps taken to resolve the issue as recited in independent Claims 1, 19, 37 and 55.

Hurd teaches a system and method for managing project issues wherein issues that are to be addressed are identified and defined via a change request form (open issue, Figure 2, Element 202; Column 2, Lines 1-4, 14-17), assigned to a project team/team member for review/analysis, the steps to be taken to resolve the issue are proposed (proposed solution, Figure 2, Element 206; Figure 3, Element 306, "Proposed"; Column 2, Lines 7-11, 18-22, 33-36; Column 5, Lines 33-45), authorizing the resolution steps, when the solution is acceptable ("Is Solution Acceptable", Figure 2, Element 208, YES branch; Figure 3, Element 308, "Accepted"; Column 5, Lines 50-65; "In step 208, a determination is made as to whether the proposed solution is acceptable and resolves the issue."; Column 5, Lines 50-52; "If the proposed solution is not accepted, control returns to step 206 and an additional proposed solution is created and forwarded as described above.", Column 5, Lines 58-61), implementing the resolution steps and closing the issue (Figure 2, Element 212; Figure 3, Element 310; Column 6, Lines 12-29; "The void state 314 is used when a solution is never implemented for an issue.", Column 6, Lines 26-28 – i.e. issues/change requests in the closed state have been approved and implemented).

Hurd further teaches that the project management system and method for identifying, tracking and resolving change requests (open issues) stores a plurality of

information related to the change management process in a database (Column 2, Lines 42-45, Column 4, Lines 20-25; Column 5, Lines 63-68).

Hurd fails to teach or suggest a project management system and method comprising the definition and storage, in a database, an issue, change request and change order; defining a first relationship for each of the plurality of project tasks, requiring the definition and storage, in a database, of at least one second dependency relationship between the issue, change request and change order such that the issue, change request and change are integrated into the project task hierarchy without changing the first and second dependencies, associating a document with the issue, change request and change order wherein the document includes the proposed or authorized steps to resolve the issue and providing a graphical representation of the task, issue, change request and change order hierarchy indicating the first and second dependency relationships as recited in independent Claims 1, 37 and 55.

Primavera teaches integrating project tasks into the project hierarchy without changing (removing, destroying, distributing, etc.) the existing plurality (first/second) of task relationships/dependencies (links, associations, etc.; adding/inserting activities between activities, auto linking activities, adding/removing activities in a chain of activities; Pages 62, 96, 144-145; Paragraph 1, Page 63; Figures 5-6 below) in an analogous art of project management for the purposes of enabling users to revise/update project schedules by adding/inserting, removing/dissolving, modifying or

moving tasks into/out of the existing task hierarchy (schedule, work breakdown schedule, etc.) thereby accounting for changes in the project (Pages 144-145).

Primavera further teaches a project management system and method for defining, planning, monitoring, controlling and managing projects comprising a plurality of hierarchically (work breakdown structure, outline, levels, etc.; Pages 33, 75, 125-129, 219, 253-) organized and interdependent tasks, activities, processes, resources and the like remotely over a computer network comprising (Preface, Pages 4-7, 58-66, 179):

- defining and storing a plurality of tasks (activities, sub-tasks, etc.) having status information in a database (Page 8) that is selectively accessible (permission, security, access control, etc.; Pages 50-52) over a computer network (Pages 7, 58-63, 96, 198-199, 253-254);

- defining and storing two or more (several, plurality, first/second, etc.) dependency relationships (links, associations, "relationship line", "trace logic", "successor", "predecessor", WBS, etc.) between each of the plurality of tasks to define a hierarchy of tasks in a database (Pages 15, 53, 59, 64-66, 96, 199, 253-254) such that the defined tasks are integrated (linked, associated, etc.) into the plurality of other tasks in the project task hierarchy without changing the task dependencies (Page 4, Bullet 6);

- retrieving (accessing, viewing, etc.) and updating (editing, modifying) of task information (status, description, etc.) stored in a database remotely over a network (Pages 179-191);

- wherein each of the defined task (activity, etc.) includes a status and enables updating the status (Pages 181-186, 193-197);

- the status of the task (issue, activity, work item, etc.) is at least one of: not started, on track (ahead), complete, in trouble (behind), on hold ("suspend") or cancelled (e.g. duration remaining, percent complete, "current progress bar", "ahead of schedule", "behind schedule", etc.; Pages 174-175, 177, 184, 193-197);

- the issue (task, change, activity, event, problem, defect, bug, enhancement, support request, etc.) was previously unidentified at the time when the plurality of tasks were defined ("Few projects proceed exactly as planned. The scope of the project changes, some activities fall behind schedule or occur out of sequence, and resource requirements are revised.", Pages 134-136, 167-168 193-197).

Primavera's Project Planner does not expressly teach a project management system and method comprising the definition and storage, in a database, an issue, change request and change order; defining a first relationship for each of the plurality of project tasks, requiring the definition and storage, in a database, of at least one second dependency relationship between the issue, change request and change order such that the issue, change request and change are integrated into the project task hierarchy without changing the first and second dependencies, associating a document with the issue, change request and change order wherein the document includes the proposed or authorized steps to resolve the issue and providing a graphical representation of the task, issue, change request and change order hierarchy indicating the first and second dependency relationships as recited in independent Claims 1, 37 and 55.

None of the prior art of record, taken individually or in any combination, teach, inter alia, a computer implemented method, computer system and computer readable recording medium containing a computer program with instructions for defining and storing, in a database, an issue, change request and change order; defining a first relationship for each of the plurality of project tasks, requiring the definition and storage, in a database, of at least one second dependency relationship between the issue, change request and change order such that the issue, change request and change are integrated into the project task hierarchy without changing the first and second dependencies, associating a document with the issue, change request and change order wherein the document includes the proposed or authorized steps to resolve the issue and providing a graphical representation of the task, issue, change request and change order hierarchy indicating the first and second dependency relationships as recited in independent Claims 1, 19, 37 and 55.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- Barnes, Customization of ERP Apps Requires Development Skills (1999), teaches the importance of change management in the project management of Enterprise Resource Application projects wherein change management comprises several key functions including issue tracking/management. Barnes further teaches the commercial availability of a plurality of change management/issue tracking systems/methods including Oracle's change management tools.

- MERANT Introduces New PVCS Professional 3.5 for E-Business (1999), teaches a project change management system and method "featuring advanced issue and change management capabilities" (PVCS Tracker).

- Grygo et al., Upgrades deal with change (2000), teaches several a commercial project change management and issue tracking system and method (Continuus ChangeSynergy, PVCS ERP Change Manager) and their use for tracking/management changes (issues) associated with upgrading software applications such as Oracle.

- Gilbert, Merant Promises To Ease Complicated ERP Upgrades (2000), teaches a commercially available project change management and issue tracking system and method (PVCS ERP Change Manager).

- Smith, Kenny, Managing change with Designer and Change Manager Parts 1 and 2 (2000), teaches Oracle's commercially available project change management and


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issue tracking system and method (Change Manager, Oracle Change Management Pack).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Scott L. Jarrett whose telephone number is (571) 272-7033. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8:00AM - 5:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hafiz Tariq can be reached on (571) 272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


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Asst. Examiner
May 30, 2007


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